

(Performance by the U.S. Navy Sea Chanters.)

(The Inaugural ceremony was concluded at 12:36 p.m.)

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 249

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 249, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to qualify formerly homeless youth who are students for purposes of low income tax credit.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I also express my appreciation to my Republican colleagues for the unanimous-consent request I am going to offer at this time, which has been approved, as I understand it, by the Republican leader and the other Senators.

Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that tomorrow, January 21, at the hour of 12 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of HILLARY CLINTON to be Secretary of State; that there be 3 hours of debate, with the time equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of the nomination of Senator CLINTON; that upon confirmation, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that no other motions be in order; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess for our usual party luncheons, and that the recess begin, if it is appropriate with the distinguished Republican leader, at 12:45 p.m., rather than at 12:30, so some debate can move forward.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if the majority leader would yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would be happy to.

Mr. McCONNELL. Is the Senator suggesting that the time on Senator CLINTON's nomination run through the luncheons?

Mr. REID. Well, what I would like to do: We would stop at a quarter to 1 and come back at 2:15 to complete that debate at that time.

Mr. McCONNELL. That is fine.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

THANKING SENATOR ALEXANDER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I express my appreciation to the distinguished Senator from Tennessee for his usual courtesies. He had to wait for me to get here, and I appreciate his withholding until the Republican leader and I got here. The Senator from Tennessee is always a gentleman, and even though he and I do not agree once in a while on political issues, we always agree he is a gentleman.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for his remarks. Unless the Republican leader has some remarks, I would like to say a couple things.

AMERICA: A REMARKABLE COUNTRY

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, in August 1963, I was a law student and a summer intern in the U.S. Department of Justice here in Washington. I was standing at the back of a huge crowd on a hot day when Dr. King spoke of his dream that one day his children would be judged not "by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

The inauguration of our former colleague, Barack Obama, the day after Dr. King's birthday, symbolizes both remarkable progress on America's most intractable problem—race—and a reaffirmation of our country's most unique characteristic—a fervent belief that anything is possible.

I thought about this in the same way 4 years ago at almost this time. I formed a speech in my head that I wanted to make, but I did not make it. Senators are rarely guilty of unexpressed thoughts. I have said many things I wish I had not said, but this is one time I wish I had said, 4 years ago, what I was thinking. So I wish to say it today, right after President Obama's inauguration. And I am especially delighted Senator MARTINEZ happens to be here too.

What I was thinking 4 years ago as the new Senators were sworn in was that here were three Members of the new class who had especially unique characteristics, and they had special people in the gallery that day.

I, with Senator CARPER and some others, had been asked by the leaders

to work on the orientation for the new Senators. So we had gotten to know the new Senators, including SALAZAR and Obama and MARTINEZ, during that period of time.

So here is what I was thinking that day—and let's take them one by one. Here was Senator SALAZAR from Colorado with a Spanish surname, but he will be quick to tell you that his family has been here for 14 generations and helped to found Santa Fe. He has had a distinguished career here now. On that day 4 years ago, his mother was in the gallery.

Senator MARTINEZ was sworn in 4 years ago as a new Member of the Senate, in this case from Florida. His story, which he has just published in a remarkably good book which I have given to many of my friends, is the story of a young boy growing up very happily in Cuba whose parents took him to the airport one day, after having bought him a new suit, when he was 14 years of age, and put him on an airplane to Miami, not knowing if they would ever see him again. He was in a foster home there, then moved to Orlando. The story is all in the book. He went to Florida State, met his wife Kitty, became the mayor of Orlando, then became a member of President Bush's Cabinet, then a Member of the U.S. Senate. A very remarkable story. His mother, who put him on the airplane in Cuba, was here that day.

These same 4 years ago when we swore in these new Members of the Senate, we also had the Senator from Illinois. We all now know his story very well: a father from Kenya, a mother from Kansas. I don't need to repeat that extraordinary story, about which he has written so well in his autobiography. But what struck me was that his grandmother was in the gallery that day. It was either his grandmother or his grandfather, but I believe it was his grandmother. His father's parent was in the gallery that day on the first trip, I believe, from Africa to this country to see the son of an immigrant sworn into the U.S. Senate.

So I thought 4 years ago, and I think again today on this day on which we swear in Barack Obama as President, what a remarkable country this is. Here in this Senate 4 years ago, the 14th-generation American KEN SALAZAR is now going into President Obama's Cabinet as Secretary of the Interior. MEL MARTINEZ, having had a long career in public life as mayor in Orlando, as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, as U.S. Senator, is going on to other things in his life. Former Senator Obama, of course, is now the President of the United States. But what was remarkable to me was 4 years ago they came to this Senate, and in that gallery were their parents—and in one case a grandparent—reaffirming what I think Barack Obama's inauguration represents for us today. It was historic in the sense that it helped us symbolize the overcoming of one of our most intractable problems, the problem of race. But just as